

Message Text

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63

ACTION EA-14

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R 231215Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5112

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

UNCLAS PHNOM PENH 2755

E.O. 11652: NA

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SUBJECT: U.S. EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR PHNOM PENH FIRE VICTIMS

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 2306

B. PHNOM PENH 2395

SUMMARY-EFFECTS TO RELIEVE THE SUFFERING OF THE 10,000 VICTIMS OF THE KC SHELLING OF PHNOM PENH ON FEBRUARY 11 ARE NOW WELL UNDERWAY. THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND IOG HAVE DISTRIBUTED FOOD AND OTHER RELIEF SUPPLIES TO THE VICTIMS AND THE GKR NATIONAL MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE PLANS TO MAKE CASH PAYMENTS SHORTLY. THE U.S. HAS PROVIDED DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS AND A FIRE TRUCK AND HAS ADDITIONAL FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT IS ON ROUTE. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE INCLUDING MEDICAL RELIEF ARE NOW UNDER REVIEW. WE EXPECT THAT FURTHER US FUNDING WILL BE CHanneled THROUGH EITHER THE VOLAGS OR THE GKR TO PROVIDE BUILDING MATERIALS NEEDED FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF SHELTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LATEST GOVERNMENT FIGURES ON CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE CAUSED BY FIRE IN THE WAKE OF ENEMY SHELLING OF PHNOM PENH
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ON FEBRUARY 11 ARE: 130 KILLED, 58 SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, 106 LESS

SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, 1113 HOUSES DESTROYED, 1900 FAMILIES LEFT HOMELESS (AN ESTIMATED 10,000 PEOPLE).

2. INITIAL RELIEF WAS PROVIDED PRIMARILY BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 11 THE RED CROSS INDOCHINA OPERATIONS

GROUP DONATED PLASMA AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO A PHNOM PENH HOSPITAL TO CARE FOR THE WOUNDED AND BURNED. ON FEBRUARY 13, CRS, CARE AND IOG DISTRIBUTED RELIEF SUPPLIES TO 1870 FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE FIRE. EACH FAMILY WAS GIVEN 15 KILOS OF RICE, ONE KILO OF SALT, 1 KILO DRIED FISH OR 1 BOTTLE FISH SAUCE, ONE MOSQUITO NET, ONE KRAMAR (A CAMBODIAN SCARF), AND VARIED AMOUNTS OF CLOTHES, MATS, AND COOKING UTENSILS. IN TOTAL THIS AMOUNTED TO 28 M/T OF RICE, 1.8 M/T OF SALT, 1 M/T OF FISH, 870 BOTTLES OF FISH SAUCE, 1870 MOSQUITO NETS AND 1870 KRAMARS.

3. UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER A NATIONAL MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE HAS BEEN FORMED TO RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND COORDINATE RELIEF ACTIVITIES. TO DATE THE COMMITTEE HAS RECEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF 12 MILLION RIELS INCLUDING US CONTRIBUTION OF 5,330,000 RIELS (SEE PARAGRAPH BELOW). THE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO DISTRIBUTE CASH TO THE FIRE VICTIMS. 10,000 RIELS TO EACH FAMILY WITH WOUNDED AND 20,000 RIELS TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED. THE COMMITTEE IS ALSO REVIEWING REQUIREMENTS FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE INCLUDING MEDICAL NEEDS IN LOCAL HOSPITALS.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES THE U.S. HAS PROVIDED 5,000,000 RIELS IN EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS, 332,385 RIELS DONATED BY MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY, EIGHTEEN PINTS OF BLOOD GIVEN BY EMBASSY EMPLOYEES AND ONE FIRE TRUCK WHICH WAS FLOWN IN FROM UTAPAO BY THE USAF AT AID EXPENSE. WE EXPECT 5 MORE TRUCKS WILL BE FLOWN IN SHORTLY FROM UTAPAO. USAF TECHNICIANS ARE NOW ON THE SCENE AND ARE DEMONSTRATING THE EQUIPMENT USE AS WELL AS PROVIDING AN ASSESSMENT OF PHNOM PENH FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITIES.

5. WE CONSIDER US CONTRIBUTION PROVIDED THUS FAR TO BE INITIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIMS OF THE FIRE. EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS WERE PROVIDED TO COVER THE MOST URGENT AND IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS

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ARISING FROM THE WAKE OF THE FIRE AND WERE ALSO A TEST OF THE GKR ABILITY TO ORGANIZE A RELIEF EFFORT. THE GKR IS PLANNING TO PROVIDE ENOUGH CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS TO THE FIRE VICTIMS TO ENABLE THEM TO RECONSTRUCT SIMPLE STRUCTURES. CARE, CRS, WORLD VISION AND IOG HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO FUND AT LEAST PART OF THIS EXPENSE. WE ARE ALSO PREPARED TO PROVIDE COUNTERPART FUNDING.

6. ANOTHER AREA WE ARE ASSESSING IS THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. DR. KENNEDY, NOW ON TDY FROM USAID/SAIGON, IS STUDYING NEEDS IN PHNOM PENH HOSPITALS. WE EXPECT TO HAVE HIS REPORT SHORTLY. IN THE MEANWHILE IOG IS PLANNING TO BRING ANOTHER MEDICAL TEAM INTO PHNOM PENH AND IS PREPARED ON AN INTERMIN BASIS TO FURNISH ONE OF ITS TEAMS ALREADY IN-COUNTRY. ENDERS

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